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## STATISTICAL WORK IN THE OFFICE OF THE SURGEON GENERAL OF THE ARMY.

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The statistics prepared in the office of the Surgeon General of the Army are of three kinds, namely:

I. Current statistics relating to the disease conditions of the army.

II. General vital statistics of the army.

III. Special statistics dealing with the work of experts recently called into the service.

### I. CURRENT STATISTICS.

The office receives weekly telegraphic reports relative to diseases and deaths and general health conditions from each of the army camps, and a consolidated report from each of the departments; the department reports comprising all posts that do not report to the War Department direct. The information thus received is tabulated on a special form, and ratios are made for admissions to sick report and noneffectives and for the various diseases. A consolidated report is then prepared for the camps of the National Guard and the National Army. These reports are brought together and consolidated with the combined reports of the departments making a general report for the army as a whole. From these general reports a weekly statistical letter headed "Diseased Conditions Among Troops in the United States" is prepared. The figures for each division are entered week by week upon a form specially prepared for such purpose. This shows the variation of the weekly rates in the separate divisions. From these a combined form is prepared each week showing the rates for all the divisions. This furnishes the basis of comparison of the different divisions by weeks. From these data, charts are prepared for each division showing the admission and noneffective rates from week to week, and consolidated rates for the different infectious diseases in the National Guard, National Army and Regulars. This work furnishes a current statistical index of health condi-

tions in the various camps and departments, and constitutes an important factor in health regulation in the different divisions of the army.

## II. GENERAL VITAL STATISTICS.

The general vital statistics of the army now being compiled in the Surgeon General's Office are similar to those published in the Surgeon General's annual reports for many years. The increase in the size of the army, however, has necessitated a change in the method of handling the statistical material. The basis of the statistics here prepared is a schedule report card known as Form 52. This form gives detailed information concerning every case admitted to sick report that receives treatment for any conditions of importance. The information from these cards was formerly tabulated by hand methods. On account of the increased volume of the business a coding book and corresponding punch cards have been prepared and the data will be transferred to such cards and tabulated by machines.

The preparation of the coding book involved a revision of the classification and nomenclature of diseases and traumatisms. The classification of diseases previously used in the medical department of the army was the one known as the "Bellevue Classification." This classification, while an improvement on the classifications that preceded it, was unsatisfactory in many respects. With reference to nervous and mental diseases the coding book follows the classification already in use in the new division of neurology and psychiatry; the classification of mental diseases being the same as that adopted by the American Medico-Psychological Association at its meeting in New York in May, 1917. The new classification of traumatisms is very complete and its use will result in giving more detailed information concerning wounds than have previously appeared in our army reports.

## III. SPECIAL STATISTICS.

The statistical work in the new divisions of the Surgeon General's Office may be illustrated by reference to the division of neurology, psychiatry and psychology which was organized under the direction of Major Pearce Bailey.

This division is separated into two sections, one dealing with neurology and psychiatry, the other with psychology. The work of the first section consists of two principal lines of activity: the examination of troops for the detection of nervous and mental disease and defect, and the care of the soldiers who become mentally ill. Up to the present time the work of examining has been the principal function of the section, but when active fighting begins the number of mentally ill to be cared for will probably assume large proportions.

As this division, like several others in the Surgeon General's Office, was organized after the entry of the United States in the war, and as neurological and psychiatric examinations of troops had never before been attempted on a large scale, there existed no system of records that would furnish an adequate accounting of the work performed or results accomplished. In the beginning examiners were sent to the various army reorganization camps and to the headquarters of the divisions of the National Guard in several states, and were instructed to send reports of the work performed to the Surgeon General's Office. The inadequacy of such reports was soon apparent. After a careful survey of the whole situation a system of records was adopted which it is hoped will ensure fairly uniform procedure on the part of examiners and reliable reports so classified that they may be combined, and desired information obtained therefrom.

Having in mind the necessity of keeping army records as simple as possible, three blank schedules were prepared. First, a form for the record of the neurological and psychiatric examinations. This blank contains a brief outline of the points to be covered in the examinations, and the order to be observed in reporting findings. The purpose of this form is to supply a definite record of the findings of the examiner that could be checked up by an expert in the office and finally be filed with the soldier's papers. Second, a statistical data card calling for certain facts concerning each case examined that was found to have nervous or mental disease or defect. The card provides for a specific diagnosis under one of the following heads: nervous disease, psychosis, psychoneurosis, constitutional psychopathic state, inebriety, and mental defect; together

with data concerning the soldier's age, residence, race, nativity, economic condition, previous environment, previous diseases, army service, wounds and injuries, and family history. These blanks serve two important purposes: they form an adequate record and they require close study of cases by examiners. The third blank calls for a general numerical report to be submitted monthly by the senior medical examiner at each station. This blank calls for the organizations examined, the strength of command and a summary of examinations and disposal of cases. These reports give a general view of conditions in this field at each station and enable the statistician to compare the nervous and mental cases found with the total examined and the strength of command at the several stations.

The plan has nothing remarkable about it except its newness, it being the first effort on the part of our army authorities to conduct and record special examinations to determine the nervous and mental status of soldiers. The system of reports of examinations here outlined went into effect October 1, 1917, and reports for only two months have been received. Thus far from one to three per cent. of the men examined have been found to be mentally diseased or defective.

The section in psychology is engaged in testing the intelligence of troops at various cantonments, the purpose being to weed out those who are incapable of understanding orders and to discover those who possess superior intelligence. The latter, if otherwise capable, would naturally be assigned to responsible and difficult work. Major Yerkes and his assistants in this section have prepared an effective system of tests and records which enable the examiners to perform their work with accuracy and dispatch. The point scale of marking is used, and the relative standing of the men can be seen at a glance from the final rating sheet. In the early tests it was found that from two to six per cent. of the men were of a high order of intelligence and from three to five per cent., mentally deficient.

Each of the other new divisions in the Surgeon General's Office is compiling statistical records of its special work.

The results when finally brought together will constitute a remarkable chapter in medical and military annals.